

Dorris Ranch  
201 Dorris Street  
Springfield  
Lane County  
Oregon

HABS No. OR-155

HABS  
ORE,  
20-SPRIF,  
1-

MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107-1372

ADDENDUM TO:  
DORRIS RANCH  
201 Dorris Street  
Springfield  
Lane County  
Oregon

HABS NO. OR-155

HABS  
ORE  
20-SPRIF,  
1-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

HABS  
ORE  
20-SPRIF  
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DORRIS RANCH

HABS No. OR-155

Location: 201 Dorris Street  
Springfield, Lane County, Oregon

Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
U.S.G.S. 7.5' Eugene East Quadrangle:  
10 498670 4875030

Present Owner: Wilmalane Park and Recreation District  
Springfield, Oregon

Present Occupant: Wilmalane Park and Recreation District

Present Use: Living History Farm

Significance: The Dorris Ranch, an early 20th-century agricultural site in the Willamette Valley, is situated at the confluence of the coast and middle forks of the Willamette River in Lane County. George Dorris purchased the property in 1892 and developed the ranch into the first commercial filbert orchard in the United States. Nationally significant, the 250-acre ranch was started by using new, innovative farming methods and the orchards continue in successful production yet today.

See project field records for architectural and condition analysis and copies of photographs.

## Introduction

The Dorris Ranch, an early 20th century agricultural site in the Willamette Valley, is situated at the confluence of the Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette River in Lane County, Oregon. George A. Dorris purchased the property in 1892 and developed the Ranch into the first commercial filbert orchard in the United States. Nationally significant, the 250-acre Dorris Ranch was developed by using new, innovative farming methods, and its 75 acres of filbert orchards continue in successful production today. Presently under the ownership of Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Dorris Ranch is being developed and operated as a living history farm.

The Dorris house, built by George A. and Lulu Dorris in 1899, was later occupied by the Ben F. and Kay Dorris family after George's death in 1936. With the change in ownership to George's nephew Ben, the Ranch underwent major physical changes in the domestic area. In the late 1930s, the 97-foot-long concrete swimming pool, naturally fed by the river and ground water, was built to the west of the house. Shortly afterward, to make room for a growing family, the Dorris house porches were enclosed for sleeping, the kitchen was extensively remodeled, a new bathroom was added to the second floor, and new exterior cedar shingle siding was installed to complete the remodel. Within the next several years, a new garage, changing house/playroom, and freezer house were constructed directly south of the Dorris house. Within a very short time, this cluster of structures became the center of all social activity for the Dorris family and their many guests.

Shortly after the property was acquired by Willamalane in 1972, the changing house/playroom was dismantled and removed from the Ranch. A temporary greenhouse, constructed on the original changing house/playroom foundation, has recently been removed.

During the summer of 1989, a team of researchers conducted an investigation to determine the original appearance, current physical

condition, and future restoration and use recommendations for the Dorris house complex. The Dorris Ranch House Historic Structures Report was conducted in three concurrent segments: historic research; condition analysis; and architectural drawings. Through extensive research, the team attempted to determine the appearance, use, and historic significance of each structure up through the 1940s time period. In addition, the report contains a written architectural analysis and photographs which document the current physical condition, existing damage, structural problems, and use of building materials. Final recommendations have been proposed for the preservation, ongoing maintenance, and long-term protection of the structures.

## **Building History Report - Dorris Ranch**

### **House Complex**

#### **Evolution of the Ranch:**

When George A. and Lulu Dorris purchased the Ranch, they first resided in the former Thurston house located west of the current house site.<sup>1</sup> During 1899 they constructed the two-story house that stands today, and all domestic activities took place at this new location.

The main house is a simple, late-nineteenth-century, rectangular, two-story farmhouse with four main rooms on the first floor and, in 1899, two rooms on the second floor.<sup>2</sup> The main form of the building is topped with a gable roof. The east and southeast one-story projections, as well as the north and west verandas, are covered with shed roofs.

With the exception of some cosmetic changes, the house has remained in its present form for over forty years. The exterior and interior have limited ornamentation, thus giving the house a very modest appearance. Its axis is roughly oriented east-west. The formal entrance faces west, overlooking a historically unobstructed view of the filbert orchards. At the time of its construction it probably looked like any of a dozen farmhouses found in the area: it was built to be functional.

Unfortunately, there is no record of who built the Dorris Ranch house. There were, however, several carpenters and builders living in the Springfield area between 1893 and 1902, according to period city directories and newspapers. An inventory of similarly styled houses of the same time period found in Springfield's Washburne Historic District has disclosed that builders were often the actual owners of the houses they constructed. Other houses in the Historic District with the same exterior characteristics as the Dorris house have little information on the builders. The true builder of this house may never be known.

The construction materials for the Dorris house were probably purchased from Springfield Lumber Mill because of its close proximity to

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<sup>1</sup>Personal communication with Reynold Briggs, longtime resident and manager of the Dorris Ranch property, July 1989.

<sup>2</sup>The second story was later divided into three rooms with adjoining hallways.

the building site. City directories indicate that this mill was most active before the turn of the century and was the primary lumber mill before the coming of Booth-Kelly Lumber Company in 1902.

#### The Building Group:

Changes within the Dorris Ranch building group, including additions of outbuildings and alterations to the main house, occurred during at least two separate stages. Four outbuildings were added between 1899 and 1925, though the exact dates of construction are unknown. Close to the Dorris house was a woodshed, an outhouse, a garage, and a chicken house. In or around 1924, a first-floor bathroom was added on the south side of the house.

The later phase of development commenced shortly after George A. Dorris' nephew, Ben, and his family moved to the Ranch around 1936. Mary (Dorris) Trumpener, Ben's daughter, was only four years old at the time but remembers when changes to the house began.

"My parents had planned to tear the house down and build another house, and they had a friend who was an architect in Eugene and he drew up plans for a house. My mother liked colonial things, so it was going to be done in colonial style, but the War came, so they never did. They did some remodeling. They started out in 1940...once they started with one thing, then they started on something else and so on; so it's all changed."<sup>3</sup>

According to Mary and her brother, George E., a great deal of changes occurred not only to the house but to the entire homesite during the late 1930s and early 1940s. A swimming pool constructed of poured concrete became the first improvement to the property in the late 1930s, followed by three structures built between 1940 and 1943. These structures included the previously mentioned new garage, a freezer house, and a

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<sup>3</sup> Transcription from a taped interview with Mary Dorris Trumpener, July 10, 1987, p.4.

changing house/playroom to accompany the swimming pool. As the original George A. Dorris outbuildings no longer became of use to the Ben Dorris family, they were removed. With these changes came the addition of walkways, the rearrangement of the driveway approach, and the planting of new trees and shrubs.

The woodshed was once located on the east side of the house close to the kitchen. A 1936 aerial photograph shows this building had a gable roof with an east-west ridge. George E. Dorris recalls that this structure "faced the porch and was a good sized wooden frame building with just one door, a door on the side somewhere, in which the wood for heating the house and for the kitchen stove was stored."<sup>4</sup> This building is no longer standing.

The exact location of the outhouse is unknown at this time. However, it was likely located to the east of the house and woodshed.<sup>5</sup> This location would have kept the outhouse hidden, and downward from both winter and summer prevailing winds. The building was likely disassembled with the installation of indoor plumbing in the mid-1920s.

As for the other outbuildings, both the garage and chicken house have been relocated to other areas of the Ranch. The garage was moved by Reynold Briggs sometime between 1939 and 1942 to be used as a storage facility. Briggs rebuilt the garage structure to suit his needs, and only two walls of the original building were used in the reconstruction (Fig. 1). It is presently located next to the pump house on the east edge of the Cannery Orchard. This building appears in historic photographs taken from the swimming pool, so there is some evidence of what it originally looked like (Fig. 2). Oral informants have provided supplemental information on the garage's form as well. Located off the northeast corner of the house, the gabled building was a two-sided, open-ended structure through which one would drive. Two sliding doors, one on each end, occupied the gable sides. It was constructed of 2x4 studs and was sided with 5" cove shiplap, a smaller width than the house's original siding (Fig. 3).

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<sup>4</sup> Transcription from a taped interview with George E. Dorris, June 18, 1987, tape 2, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication with Philip Dole, Professor of Architecture, University of Oregon, August 22, 1989. Dole is an authority on vernacular farm buildings in the Willamette Valley.



Ben Dorris had this garage replaced by the present garage, which is located off the southeast corner of the house. It was built following Ben and Kay's return from the 1940 Republican Convention. Their son, George E., recalls:

"...they'd gotten two of the cars which had been provided to the Convention which you could buy at a discount. So my mother got a Ford convertible and my father got a Lincoln."<sup>6</sup>

The chicken house was also moved by Reynold Briggs. Once located near the site of the changing house/playroom, to the southwest of the main house, this building has been modified and is now located next to the Briggs house. Today it is used as a tool shed.

Before the Dorris house was electrified in the mid-1920s, the family piped water to their house from a forty-foot-tall water tower. The tower, no longer extant, was located to the west of the house in the area now occupied by the pump house. Water was extracted from the well with a jack pump and channeled by gravity to the kitchen.

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<sup>6</sup> Transcription from a taped interview with George E. Dorris, June 18, 1987, tape 1, p.29.

## **Building History Report - Dorris Ranch**

### **House Exterior**

As previously mentioned, the house is a simple, vernacular farmhouse (Fig. 4). It has a crawl space below, rather than a cellar or basement, and a partial, unfinished attic above. The attic is accessible through an opening in the second floor east bedroom.

The formal front entry is located on the west side of the house and is centered on the gable end (Fig. 5). The most used entrance, however, has changed over time. Evidence of a concrete stepping stone walkway leading to the north side of the house illustrates one approach used historically. Historic photographs show a boardwalk leading to an east entrance as well. After the 1940 garage was constructed, the entrance on the southeast side of the house began to be used.

The Dorris house was initially sided in horizontal cove shiplap and was painted a chalky white (Fig. 6). The porches on three sides were once open, and the porch on the east side of the house may have been of a more utilitarian nature because of its attachment to the kitchen. The east porch is also less deep than the verandas on the north and west sides of the house. This further suggests that the east porch was simple in detail and unwallled. Its exact form has not been determined. However, it is clear that this porch was later restructured and incorporated into a kitchen expansion project initiated by Ben Dorris between 1940 and 1943.

The other two verandas were possibly more formal in their use.<sup>7</sup> The porch roofs were supported by 4x4 posts, and there was a partial wall at a three-foot height above the floor. According to Mary (Dorris) Trumpener, as well as historic photographs, the porches on the west and north sides were enclosed with multi-light windows shortly after the Ben Dorris family moved in, and the spaces were used as sleeping porches (Fig. 7). Reynold Briggs noted that these porches were screened in sometime before then.

The eastern portion of the north veranda was incorporated into the dining room at a later time. Additionally, the shiplap siding on the house and porches was covered with wooden shingles during the 1940s

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<sup>7</sup> The Ben Dorris family referred to the west and north porches and veranda; taped interview with George E. Dorris, June 18, 1987, tape 1, p.6.

remodeling, probably to cover wall changes. Recent probing has disclosed that the shingles originally were painted beige, and the trim was painted white.

The 1899 exterior doors are thick, three-panel-and-light style, typical of houses constructed between 1870 and 1926. One of the two exterior doors still hangs in its original position on the west elevation. The south door opening appears to have been created after the 1940 garage was built. The door itself is an exact match to the main front door on the west side of the house but has had its outer stile and casing patched and repaired as of June 1989 (Fig. 8). It was probably removed from another opening, perhaps from the north side, during a remodeling phase.

A contemporary, multi-light door and a screen door were retrofitted to the original porch opening at the time the porches were enclosed. The west and east porches are entered from the outside by the same 1940s multi-light door and screen door combination.

The windows were originally simple one-over-one, double-hung sash. Detailing included the "lamb's tongue" underneath each side of the upper light, at least on the first floor (Fig. 9). These original 1899 first-floor windows exist only on the west and south sides. The second-floor windows are identical to those located on the ground floor, with the exception of the lamb's tongue detail. These original 1899 windows have been modified since their initial installation and are discussed in another section of this report.

All other windows have been replaced since 1939. These include smaller one-over-one, double-hung, weighted-sash located in both bathrooms as well as on the north side of the kitchen. Multi-light, fixed windows cover the east elevation on the first floor (in the kitchen), and multi-light, fixed or top-hinged casement cover the sleeping porch elevations.

Interestingly, symmetry was a priority to both George A. Dorris and his nephew Ben. When the second floor bathroom and its window were added to the south of the original, paired, bedroom windows during the early 1940s, a false window of the same dimension and appearance was added to the north of those bedroom windows (Figs. 10, 11, 12). The exterior "window" trim was nailed to the exterior of the house giving an impression of a window without cutting a new opening in the bedroom wall.

The steeply pitched main roof and accompanying porch roofs were covered by wooden shingles from 1899 to at least the late 1920s or early 1930s. A circa 1936 photograph shows irregularly shaped asphalt shingles on the roof, and historic photographs after that date show the roof with rectangular asphalt shingles. The house was recently reroofed with rectangular asphalt shingles in the 1970s by Willamalane Park and Recreation District.

The brick, corbelled chimney is of typical design for the late nineteenth century time period. It is located in the center of the roof and appears original.

The house has simple, box eaves with equally plain trim. Some very slight modifications to the trim, in the form of replacement boards and quarter round trim pieces, occurred during the exterior shingling in the early 1940s (Fig. 13).

On the southeast side of the house there is an odd extension of the shed-roofed kitchen which has been found to be of original 1899 construction (Fig. 14). This extension is unusual because it defies the symmetry of the house and almost seems to have been incorporated into the building during initial house construction as a last-minute decision. It is not well detailed to respond to wet weather.

The existing bathroom dates to George and Lulu's occupation of the house, though it was not constructed until the 1920s (Fig. 15). Ben Dorris helped install electricity and a bathroom in or around 1924. The exterior cove shiplap can still be seen underneath the more recent shingle siding.

## Building History Report - Dorris Ranch

### House Interior

On the first floor, three rooms are located in the two-story portion of the house: the living room, the dining room, and the bedroom. Given the orientation and layout of the house, it is believed that the historic front entrance was from the west into the living room through the porch. From the living room, two doorways lead to the dining room situated on the north side of the house, and a small bedroom situated on the south side of the house. The dining room has been expanded into the adjacent north veranda. The bathroom addition on the south side of the house is accessible from the bedroom.

The stairway leading to the second floor is accessible from the dining room. The second story originally had a single wall dividing the space into two rooms. Since then, the space has been divided. The second-story ceiling still remains sloped and peaked in the center.

The shed-roof extension on the east side of the house originally contained the kitchen with a pantry to the north and a maid's room to the south. The pantry and east back porch have since been incorporated into the existing enlarged kitchen. The maid's room, situated in the southeast corner of the house, has been enlarged and converted into a utility room.

It appears that it was not until about 1924 that any changes, other than rewallpapering and painting, were made to the house. A small bathroom addition which currently exists on the south side of the house is believed to have been constructed in or around 1924.

No further substantial alterations occurred until at least 1936, when Ben and Kay Dorris moved into the house with their children. Historic photographs suggest that the verandas were enclosed immediately after they moved in. It is possible that the verandas were screened in at an earlier date by George and Lulu. Sometime after 1936, most likely circa 1940, substantial alterations occurred including the extension of the dining room and kitchen into the veranda/porches, installation of a bathroom, and reconfiguration of the upstairs. During this remodeling phase, all wall and most ceiling surfaces were covered with a muslin-backed wallpaper, with the exception of the kitchen which was finished with knotty pine

paneling. According to Reynold Briggs, a Springfield painter named Frank Fisher repainted and wallpapered the entire house. In some areas, the muslin is found covering plywood. This further verifies that it must have been installed circa 1940 or later. It is assumed that it was during this time when the wood floors of the first floor were covered with linoleum. Later minor changes occurred, probably made by recent renters.

#### First Floor:

Although the first-floor rooms are rather small, the higher ceilings and openings to adjacent veranda/back porch areas added volume and depth to the interior spaces. Plain trim is found throughout the first floor, with the exception of the rather decorative fireplace mantel. There are also some traces of ornate original wallpaper applied directly over the wide, horizontal wallboards. Since 1899, numerous layers of wallpaper and paint have been applied to the wall and ceiling surfaces. It is difficult to determine the designs of the wallpapers prior to 1940 because the wallpaper was partially scraped off during the 1940's remodeling.

The floor and ceiling surfaces are tongue and groove boards throughout the house. The baseboards and the trim surrounding door and window openings are simple 5" boards. The baseboards currently have quarter round molding at the top and at the base to cover the space between the baseboard and the flooring (Fig. 16). Judging from the paint layers, the existing quarter round molding appears to have been added at a later date, most likely circa 1940 when the walls were rewallpapered and the linoleum was installed. It is highly likely that a small trim originally existed to hide the space between the baseboard and the floor. This is evident by a shadow line on the floor in the bedroom. It was most likely quarter round. All wood surfaces, save the mantel, are covered with numerous layers of paint. It is possible, however, that the wood surfaces originally were varnished as was common at the turn of the century.

The general room layout of the first floor still exists despite some modifications and additions. The following provides a detailed description of each room on the first floor and how its use and design have changed since 1899.

### Living Room:

The living room serves as the formal entrance and entertainment space. It has window openings on both the south and the west walls, providing rather good natural lighting (Figs. 17 & 18). The decorative fireplace is directly opposite the main entrance and serves as the focal point of the room (Figs. 19, 20, 21). The original wallpaper was fairly ornate.

As found throughout the house, the floors and ceiling are finished with tongue and groove boards. Evidence of a varnished finish covered by a layer of ivory paint exists on the ceiling boards under the circa 1940 layer of muslin and wallpaper. More recently, the ceiling wallpaper has been painted. The wood floor has since been covered with layers of linoleum, making it difficult to determine the original finish. It is likely that a varnished or painted finish was used.

Remnants of the original heavy-paper backing as well as successive layers of wallpaper exist. The first two layers of wallpaper are the same, a floral pattern in green and gold on a light background. Remnants of a 3" wallpaper trim along the ceiling matches the first layers of wallpaper. A third layer of wallpaper, a brown, subdued pattern, was applied sometime before the circa 1940 muslin and wallpaper. This third layer was most likely in place by the mid-1920s.

The living room has three door openings, all apparently original. The opening leading to the dining room, as previously discussed, does not have a door (Fig. 22). The formal entry door leading to the west porch is an original three-panel-and-light door (Fig. 23). The interior door leading to the bedroom is an original four-panel door. The layers of paint indicate that they were painted green at one time to match the trim throughout the house. It is possible that originally they were varnished. Both doors have cast iron lockset/boxes and porcelain knobs. The interior door has ornate Victorian hinges and the exterior door has less decorative and heavier Victorian hinges.

The baseboard and door-opening trim is generally the same as in the rest of the house. The living room baseboards were capped by quarter round trim installed circa 1940 or later. It is possible that a different molding existed in its place. This is evident by a shadow line left on the vertical piece of the fireplace mantel where it abuts the baseboard. One

piece of baseboard to the north of the fireplace has been replaced due to the installation of a furnace register and duct. The window openings have the same simple board trim found around the door openings. It is interesting to note that the lower sashes are designed with only one sash pin on the right side while the upper sashes have two pins. This window design exists in the first floor bedroom as well. There are two styles of cast iron sash pins.

The sashes appear to be original, based on their design and layers of paint. The first two layers of paint on the window sashes and trim, as well as on the baseboards and door board trim, are green. This color matches the first two layers of green floral wallpaper. It is possible, however, that the wood trim originally was varnished rather than painted. This would be especially probable if it is determined that the ceiling and floors were originally varnished. Varnish was a common finish at the turn of the century, and there are fewer layers of paint on the trim than finishes on the wall surfaces. The original green paint on the trim surfaces in the room is covered by a tan paint which was either of the same era as the third layer of wallpaper, a subdued brown design, or the circa 1940 muslin and wallpaper.

The original, shallow-depth fireplace is brick lined, and the varnished wood mantel and the concrete hearth are intact. The mantel appears to have been removed and reinstalled at one time, most likely during the circa 1940's changes to install new wallpaper. The mantel is a different type of wood than found in the rest of the house, perhaps mahogany, and is quite ornate compared to other house details. It appears to have been purchased from a catalog or a local planing mill.

### Dining Room:

The dining room was originally a rather small room with at least one window and an exterior entrance leading out to the north veranda. A modest opening on the west wall of the room opens to the stairway and leads to the second floor (Fig. 24). Two additional doorways lead to the living room and the kitchen. Although the original wall surfaces are not accessible due to a recent gypsum board finish, it is likely that the finishes were similar to the wallpapers found in the living room.



The dining room was expanded circa 1940 by removing the wall between the north veranda and the dining room. George E. Dorris recalls that the dining room was expanded circa 1940 sometime after the porches were enclosed. There are remnants of the same muslin used throughout the house during the circa 1940 redecorating on the porch ceiling. The ribbon member of the exterior wall still exists, although it has been largely restructured. One can conjecture that originally the exterior door lined up with the porch opening and perhaps had at least one double-hung window to the east.

The floor and ceiling of the dining room and porch area were originally exposed tongue and groove boards. Evidence of a varnish finish under the layer of muslin and wallpaper on the ceiling boards exists in the original dining area. The muslin covering the porch ceiling has since been removed, exposing the wood porch ceiling (Fig. 25). The porch boards have paint layers and it is not possible to determine when they were first painted. The wood floor has since been covered with linoleum. A masking of glue used to adhere the linoleum makes it difficult to determine the original finish of the wood floor. It is possible that a varnish or paint was used. To better determine the finish, one would have to fully remove the linoleum.

The walls in the original dining area have since been covered with gypsum wall board, most likely when the previous renters lived in the house in the mid-1980's. Limited access beneath this layer verifies that the dining room was covered with muslin and wallpaper, as were the other rooms. One can also assume that layers of wallpaper applied prior to 1940 exist beneath the muslin. As evident in the living room, it is likely that the original wallpaper had a trim around the ceiling. Until the gypsum board is removed, it is not possible to more specifically determine wall finishes.

The opening leading to the living room appears never to have had a door. The opening to the kitchen most likely had a four-panel door matching the door between the living room and the bedroom, but it currently has a swinging door matching the 1940s remodeled kitchen. A third opening leads to the stairway. Currently it has a one-panel door identical to the others installed circa 1940. It is possible that originally the stairway opening did not have a door and that one was later installed to conserve heat.

Baseboards surround the room, and judging from their design and the layers of paint, they are original. The door trim is constructed from simple 5" boards with quarter round trim. The earliest layers of paint on the baseboards and on the door board trim are green, similar to the original color found in the living room.

#### Bedroom:

The bedroom is a small space which once served as a book room. As a bedroom, the room is believed originally to have had only one door opening which led into the living room (Fig. 26). Since then, additional openings have been made to the bathroom addition (1924) and to the existing utility room (circa 1940). No special features adorn this room. The walls were originally wallpapered, and the door and window openings are trimmed with the same 5" board trim found throughout the house. This trim, as well as the baseboards, remains intact.

Judging from oral histories, the bedroom has been used for a number of functions over the years since it originally served as George A. and Lulu Dorris' bedroom. An oral interview with George E. Dorris indicated that after the family moved in around 1936, the downstairs room was used as the parents' bedroom until around 1940. At that time, the room was remodeled into a book room and the parents moved into the newly remodeled second floor. In an interview, Mary (Dorris) Trumpener remembered the downstairs bedroom as a book room with many bookshelves.

The floors and ceiling of the bedroom are finished with tongue and groove boards. A new ceiling finish covers the original ceiling boards. The wood floor has been covered with linoleum. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the original finish. Preliminary analysis, however, indicates that at one time it was painted red. A shadow line from the original trim which covered the crack between the baseboard and the floorboards exists. Because there is no paint beneath the location of the original trim piece, it is most likely that the floors were not originally painted. The floor was probably painted some time prior to the 1940s redecorating. Full exposure of the floor would help to verify the paint finish.

Two or three layers of wallpaper exist below the muslin on the bedroom walls. A preliminary analysis revealed that the first layer has a

floral design. It is difficult to discern whether there is one or two additional layers beneath the muslin. The layer directly behind the muslin has a multi-colored floral design on a light background.

The 1899 doorway leading to the living room has an original four-panel, wood door with cast iron hardware. Although the doorway leading to the present utility room also has an original door with hardware, it is likely that this opening was added circa 1940. This is suggested by the awkward trim details and the likelihood that historically there was no need for an opening connecting the Dorris' bedroom and the maid's room (now the utility porch) (Fig. 27). Layers of paint reveal that the original doors were green initially, followed by dark beige, light beige, and a continuing series of paint colors.

The double-hung windows are the same as those in the living room (Fig. 28). The three earliest layers of paint are the same as found on the doors: green, dark tan, and light tan. As mentioned previously, it is possible that the wood trim and sashes were originally varnished rather than painted.

#### Bathroom:

The bathroom, located on the south side of the house, is accessible from the bedroom and is a later addition judging from construction techniques and materials. It is likely that the bathroom was constructed in or around 1924. Mary (Dorris) Trumpener recalled being told that her father, Ben, helped to install indoor plumbing and electricity for his aunt and uncle. Records of an agreement with the Oregon/California Electrical Company indicate that the Ranch received electricity in 1924.<sup>8</sup>

According to Reynold Briggs, the downstairs bathroom was remodeled circa 1940 during the same time period when the upstairs bathroom was added (Fig. 29). If original finishes exist, they are currently covered with plywood. The window is a newer-style, double-hung, weighted window which matches those installed elsewhere during 1940s remodeling efforts.

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<sup>8</sup> Mary Horvat and Robert Melnick, "Dorris Ranch nomination to the National Register of Historic Places," 1987.

### Utility Room:

The present utility room is situated in the southeast corner of the house. It is likely that it was the maid's room, although there is little evidence regarding its historic use or layout. According to a discussion with Reynold Briggs (July 1989), there was a maid's room downstairs at the time he moved to the Ranch in 1931. George E. Dorris infers during his interview that the utility room had some other use before it was remodeled in the early 1940s. This room is the only appropriate space for the maid's quarters. According to Briggs, this arrangement existed until remodeling occurred. It is more likely, however, that the maid moved upstairs at least four years earlier in 1936 when Ben and Kay Dorris and their family moved in. An oral interview with George E. Dorris indicates that after the family moved in, the maid lived upstairs.

As a maid's room, it is quite likely that there was only one opening leading to the kitchen. As part of the remodeling efforts, the room was expanded to the east. This new east section currently houses the furnace. As described earlier, the doorway leading to the bedroom was most likely added during the remodeling efforts (Fig. 30). Additionally, the present exterior doorway could once have been a window.

Original floors and ceilings were most likely tongue and groove board, but they have since been covered up with carpeting and plywood. The walls have been covered with plywood as well. Traces of the original finishes can be seen beneath the plywood. They include three layers of wallpaper covered with muslin, followed by additional layers of wallpaper. The first layer of wallpaper is a fleur-de-lis design, while the second and third layers are a floral pattern. Muslin covers this, indicating that perhaps a floral pattern existed during the 1920s.

Currently, there is a built-in corner cabinet in the southwest corner. It appears to have been built a number of years after the 1940s remodeling because there are two layers of wallpaper covering the muslin on the wall behind the cabinet (Fig. 31).

### Kitchen:

Currently, the kitchen is a large, open room with a back hall in the northeast corner leading to the outside. All surfaces are finished in knotty pine paneling. Prior to 1940, the kitchen was considerably smaller than

what exists today. When the kitchen was enlarged, it incorporated the east porch and the pantry leaving no evidence of the historic fabric. According to a discussion with Reynold Briggs, the layout of the kitchen was similar to its current plan--cabinets with a countertop and a sink along the west wall (Fig. 32). Mary (Dorris) Trumpener mentions in her interview that she remembers a wood stove.

The east porch was entirely restructured when it was incorporated into the kitchen. There is no evidence regarding its original design. One historic photograph indicates that the porch did not span the entire length of the east wall. As illustrated in that photograph, it did not extend to the northeast corner of the house where the back hall is currently located (Fig. 33). As previously noted, symmetry was an important aspect to the overall appearance of the house. In keeping with this desire for symmetry, one can speculate that the porch did not extend to the southeast corner of the house where the furnace is currently housed.

As mentioned earlier, one can assume that the back, east porch was originally a utilitarian porch, perhaps with simple post supports, but without the low wall surrounding it like the verandas. It seems to have been a rather shallow porch with a low ceiling. The original porch floor slope is evident in the remodeled kitchen. It is not known why the porch floor was rebuilt with the original slant.

The wall which once existed between the kitchen and the porch most likely had a doorway and at least one double-hung window, similar to the wall between the living room and the west porch. Currently, the east wall of the kitchen has two fixed, multi-pane windows with a scalloped valance above (Fig. 34). The north end of the east porch currently serves as a back hall.

There is evidence in the crawl space that a wall dividing the kitchen from the once-existent pantry spanned across the north niche of the kitchen (Fig. 35). A historic photograph indicates that originally the pantry had a double-hung window to the east of the present window (Fig. 33). A cool-air circulation vent is also shown in the photograph. At the time the interior wall was removed to enlarge the kitchen, the original window was covered, and a small, double-hung, weighted window with a scalloped valance was installed. There is no other evidence regarding the design of the old pantry.

It is assumed that the kitchen's original wood floor still exists beneath the present layers of carpeting and linoleum. It was not possible to verify this without damaging the existing carpeting which is in good condition. One can also speculate that traces of the original ceiling and wall finishes exist beneath the V-groove, knotty pine paneling. All original baseboards, doorway trim, and cupboards have been replaced with knotty pine as well. However, one exposed portion behind the electrical box in the back hall revealed original exterior siding.

#### Sleeping Porches, West and North:

As previously mentioned, the sleeping porches originally were outdoor verandas. They served as a sheltered place to sit outside and provided a transition area from the outdoors to interior spaces. Tongue and groove boards cover the floor and ceiling surfaces. Originally, the walls were covered with shiplap siding. The verandas were not altered substantially until Ben and Kay Dorris and their children moved into the house in 1936.

Initially the verandas were screened prior to 1936, according to Reynold Briggs. George E. Dorris reported that after 1936, but before the major remodeling beginning in 1940, they were fully enclosed to become sleeping porches. When the porches were fully enclosed, partitions were installed to create three separate rooms. Mary (Dorris) Trumpener recalls that when she was young she slept with her brothers in the east room of the sleeping porch (Fig. 36)<sup>9</sup>. Her brother George also refers to the northeast room as a bedroom and the west porch area as a "semi-bedroom, semi-porch" (Fig. 37).

The original tongue and groove flooring has a number of layers of paint. The wood ceiling exists but has been covered with plywood to create a level ceiling. Given that the porches were exposed to the weather, it is likely that the floor and ceiling were originally painted.

The walls have been covered with plywood, thus the original finish of all surfaces is indeterminable. Limited access beneath the plywood on the

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Dorris Trumpener mentions in her interview that in the beginning she slept upstairs in one bedroom and the "hired girl" slept in the other until the house was remodeled.

exterior walls of the house verifies that they were originally sided with cove shiplap.

The new partitions have doors separating the three rooms in the veranda. The two doorways which lead to the northwest corner room have four-panel doors original to the 1899 house and must have been moved from their original locations (Fig. 38). It is possible that these doors were once used for the interior kitchen doorways and were replaced because they did not match the 1940s decor. Although all hardware has been replaced, evidence of the location of the original locksets exists. Layers of paint reveal the original green tones used historically throughout the house.

### Second Floor:

The stairway up to the second floor was slightly remodeled in the early 1940s. The walls were sheathed with plywood, most likely to create an even surface for wallpapering. Painted baseboards are found on either side of the staircase. Muslin, with a layer of beige print wallpaper of the same pattern as the dining and living rooms, now covers the walls of the stairway. An inappropriate galvanized pipe railing, added perhaps in the 1970s, leads up the stairs on the left side. The plywood hides any visible evidence of marks left by an original railing, that is, if the staircase had a railing.

In its 1899 appearance, the second floor consisted of an east room and a west room divided by a wall with a single doorless opening. This was verified when the construction of the partition wall was examined.

Although George A. and Lulu used the first floor for their living and sleeping space, they must have utilized these rooms in some manner, maybe as guest rooms. Layers of pre-1940 wallpaper and paint strengthen this idea.

Soon after Ben and Kay Dorris and their four children moved in, the two rooms were separated by a door, and the east room became known to the family as the "inner room," or the maid's room. The west room, referred to as the "outer room" by Mary (Dorris) Trumpener, became a play area as well as a storage room. Mary also recalled that after closets and shelves were constructed, canned goods were stored in this room.

Between 1940 and 1943, the space was further divided into a stair hallway, the two bedrooms, a full bathroom, and a small hallway between

the bathroom and the bedrooms. A wooden stair railing, perhaps ordered from a catalogue, divided the staircase from the stair hallway, and a linen closet was constructed at the entrance to the east bedroom (Fig. 39).

These changes occurred almost simultaneously, and it is difficult to discern where one project began and another followed. It is clear, however, that the second floor remained as two large rooms, at least until Ben Dorris and his family moved in, if not a short while after they moved in.

Though a thorough examination and analysis of the interior finishes is still necessary, preliminary examinations have disclosed a series of wall and ceiling coverings. The west and east walls of the west room have evidence of dark green paint directly over the horizontal rough-sawn sheathing, covered by one to two layers of wallpaper. The 1940 muslin covers this, which is then covered by the 1940 beige wallpaper found elsewhere in the house, and is finally covered with paint. The west and east rooms and stair hallway both have similar wall and ceiling coverings.

With the exception of the bathroom, the floor throughout the upstairs is tongue and groove Douglas fir in a wider dimension (6") than the first floor. It has been painted twice with two shades of gray. Originally it may have been unfinished, then varnished, and then painted as a way to "rejuvenate" the floor. Wood floors were often painted after they had seen many years of wear. Mary (Dorris) Trumpener recalls that during her childhood "[t]hey took the leftover colors from making rugs and made them into a candy-striped rug, which was very common at that time, and... wouldn't show the dirt." Tack holes still remain on the floor where this "carpeting" was laid.

The windows in the east and west rooms located on the outer walls are the original, paired, one-over-one, double-hung, unweighted sash. As previously mentioned, these windows have been modified, probably to make them operable after several years of swelling. This type of double-hung window often became "inoperable" in time due to differential expansion and contraction between the sash and the framing. The windows now slide up along retrofitted metal tubes located on either side of the frame (Fig. 40). There are no sash pins and no internal rope weights. These metal slider tubes are rather unusual additions but probably date to the early 1940s.

Window trim and baseboard finish is consistent with what is found on the first floor. Initial investigations show layers of paint, however it is



not unreasonable to suggest, at least for the window trim, that a varnish finish may have been used during George A. and Lulu Dorris' day. Again, a thorough analysis of finishes will clarify this.

All doors are exact replicas of the one-panel type found on the first floor. Their consistent appearance strengthens the idea that all of these doors were hung during the early 1940s remodeling undertaken by Ben and Kay Dorris. All doors have been painted.

Closets were constructed from plywood materials in the early 1940s remodeling period in both the east and west rooms, as well as in the hallway leading to the bathroom (Fig. 41). The closets in the west room cover the entire south wall and are painted inside and out. The east room's closets are located along the partition wall on the west side (Fig. 42). These are also painted inside and out.

The early 1940s bathroom is sheathed with plywood then covered with a more contemporary wallpaper (Fig. 43). The original wood floor is covered with linoleum. Both the bathtub and toilet are 1940s contemporary. The sink was removed this summer by Willamalane Park and Recreation District. There is a solitary, one-over-one, double-hung, weighted window on the east wall (Fig. 44). This window is identical to those found in the downstairs bathroom and in the old pantry space on the north side of the kitchen.

## Building History Report - Dorris Ranch

### Outbuildings

#### Garage/Vehicle Storage:

The existing garage, located to the south of the house, was built in 1940 (Figs. 45 & 46). It is assumed that at the time it was built, the old drive-through garage, once located to the east of the house, was moved to its present location and substantially altered to serve as a storage area for farm equipment. The location of the new garage required the road to be extended around the east side of the house in its current configuration. At one time, there was a lean-to woodshed attached to the back west side of the garage. With the exception of the woodshed, which has since been removed, the garage has not been altered.

The garage is a simple, rectangular structure with a gabled roof and is covered with shingles nailed to shiplap sheathing. It is divided into two partitioned spaces on the interior: a vehicle storage area on the south and a general storage area on the north (Fig. 47). Above the car area is a loft accessible by a fold-down ladder. The loft was likely used originally for additional storage space. All exterior walls are unfinished on the interior face and expose the back side of the shiplap sheathing. The interior partition wall is finished with horizontal tongue and groove boards on the vehicle storage side.

There are two large, beaded-board garage doors on the south side of the east facade leading to the vehicle storage area (Fig. 48). There is a side entrance with a five-cross-panel door on the north facade directly opposite the utility room door of the house. The concrete-covered walkway between these two doors is covered, connecting the garage to the main house (Fig. 49). There are five one-over-one, double-hung windows, two on the west facade, one at the first floor level on the south facade, and one at each gable end at the attic level (south and north). The floor of the garage is concrete.

#### Changing House/Playroom:

Mary (Dorris) Trumpener indicated during her interview that the changing house/playroom was constructed in the 1940s sometime after the garage was constructed. It was situated to the southwest of the house,

apparently where the chicken house was once located. The changing house/playroom was dismantled in 1978 by Willamalane Park and Recreation District and replaced by a greenhouse on the original foundation (Fig. 50). In addition to the foundation, all that remains of the original structure are the concrete steps and the walkway leading to the house.

The changing house/playroom was a simple rectangular building with a gable roof. It had a single entrance on the north side where the remaining concrete steps exist today. According to photographs taken when the building was demolished, there were one-over-one, double-hung, weighted windows piercing the east and west facades. There is no documentation regarding whether or not there were windows on the north facade, but it is likely that there was one or two windows to the east of the entrance. The building was sided with shingles to match the garage and the house.

The interior consisted of a large room with three small rooms in a row along the back south wall. Interviews with Mary and George E. Dorris indicate that the large open area was used as a playroom and had a large pool table and pinball machine. A wood stove once stood on the east side of the building between the two windows. Based on photographs, the south end of the room had a central bathroom with flanking changing rooms. Mary mentions that the east changing room was designated for boys/men, and the west changing room was designated for girls/women. Both changing rooms had a rack and some simple hooks for hanging clothing. The women's changing room also had a towel closet.

The entire interior was finished with the same horizontal knotty pine paneling as in the kitchen of the house. All of the trim and doors were stained and varnished knotty pine. The style of the original front door is unknown.

#### Freezer House:

Mary (Dorris) Trumpener states in her oral interview that the freezer house was constructed during World War II for the storage of chickens. It was built two or three years after the garage was constructed, and it was one of the many domestic-area improvement projects undertaken by Ben Dorris in the early 1940s.

The freezer house exists in its original location between the garage and the changing house/playroom. The small, rectangular building has a gabled roof and is sided with shingles to match the other structures (Figs. 51 & 52). It has a simple pedimented front porch on the north end and a compressor shed at the rear (south). Both are covered with a gable roof supported by posts. The front porch supports and floorboards have been replaced. Shadow lines on the concrete foundation indicate that a stairway once led from the concrete pathway up to the front porch.

The entrance to the building leads from the front porch into a storage room. An interior door leads from this storage room to the freezer area which has built-in compartments. The cooling components of the built-in compartments are still intact, although currently there is no power connected to the building. Both doors are constructed of heavy metal covered with painted plywood. They are insulated with sawdust. The partition between the two rooms and the attic is also insulated. All walls are covered with painted plywood which has severely delaminated over the years. The floors are tongue and groove boards, many of which have deteriorated to the point of collapse.

## **Building History Report - Dorris Ranch**

### **Landscape Features**

Just as alterations have occurred to the Dorris Ranch buildings, the surrounding landscape itself has evolved to reflect changing styles and tastes. The area looked much different during the days of George and Lulu, particularly in the number of trees that formerly existed.

One of the most marked landscape modifications to take place was the construction of a swimming pool. Built between 1936 and 1939 at the request of Ben Dorris, the poured concrete pool was constructed by Reynold Briggs' father.<sup>10</sup> The pool, located several yards due west of the house, is of irregular shape (nearly a crescent) and is oriented north-south (Figs. 53, 54, 55).

A diversion channel was cut from the Coast Fork of the Willamette River several years before the pool was constructed. This existing swale was widened for the swimming pool and also became a means for filling it. The pool's sides slope gradually to reach a depth of approximately ten feet. A sump pump was installed at its deepest point to ensure a continuous flow of water into the pool from a ground water source. A galvanized ladder is attached to the apron, or lip, of the pool on the east side. This apron is a separate concrete pour from the rest of the pool.

The only modification to the swimming pool itself is a later addition of a concrete wall and flood gate at the south end (Fig. 56). Evidence of concrete joinery and different concrete texture clearly shows that this wall is a retrofit. Concrete buttresses were added to the south side at an even later date in an effort to stabilize the wall.

Associated with the pool is a series of four concrete terraces. These terraces were constructed shortly after the completion of the swimming pool and were originally planted with sword ferns and "night blooming star," according to the Dorris family and historic photographs (Fig. 57). Today these terraces show no sign of the original plantings and are barely discernable because of their covering of large tree growth (Fig. 58).

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<sup>10</sup> Historic photographs show the construction of the pool with the house in the background. None of the 1940-era outbuildings show in the pictures.

Once the pool and terraces were finished, sand was brought in to form a small beach area on the northeast edge of the pool. Photographs show that this beach disappeared after several years, and the area became overgrown with vegetation (Figs. 53 & 54).

The view from the west side of the main house to the swimming pool and terraces is obstructed by a newer row of mature fir trees. Planted twenty to twenty-five years ago, these trees, along with the trees currently growing in the terraces, completely alter the intended view from the house to the pool feature and background filbert orchard. Before these trees were planted, only two fir trees and a single pine tree occupied this area. The fir trees have since been removed, and their stumps can be seen within the line of the newer firs (Figs. 59 & 60). George E. Dorris remembered large spotlights hanging from these old fir trees. They were directed toward the pool and terraces to accommodate night swimming.

Other important landscape features include a causeway and walkways which are found around the house and its outbuildings. The causeway, or roadway that has been artificially raised above water-saturated ground, was the principal thoroughway to the Dorris Ranch house. It led directly to the former drive-through garage and circled to the east and north. A driver would have two options: either drive directly into the garage or to the east side of the garage (Fig. 61). Either way, the route would circle to the east and north and continue on the same two-track road the driver initially entered upon. The circle end of this path changed when the 1940 garage was constructed on the southeast side of the house. Today the causeway's dirt tracks have been covered with gravel, but the location of the circle drive is still vaguely recognizable.

Historic photographs show a series of paired, concrete stepping stones leading to the north entrance of the house. Recent probing has uncovered some of these buried in the grass. These likely date from the late 1930s and early 1940s porch enclosure and dining room/north entry additions to the house.

Poured concrete paths and sidewalks on the south side of the house lead to the freezer house and changing house/playroom site, as well as the garage. All of these were laid by Reynold Briggs' father.

A substantial, single-lane, wooden bridge with railings once crossed the diversion channel at the south end of the swimming pool (Fig. 62). This

was also a vehicle route into the orchards. The bridge was disassembled and replaced by the present plank bridge in the early 1970s by Willamalane Park and Recreation District (Fig. 63). A concrete footing from the former bridge still can be seen hidden among the vegetation on the west side of the diversion channel.

Another walkway feature shown in a historic photograph was a boardwalk leading from the back (east) porch of the house to the original George A. Dorris garage (Fig. 64). Little is known about this boardwalk, but it was probably removed at least by the time the garage was relocated.

Close to the area where the boardwalk once crossed is a recently planted (twenty to twenty-five years ago) north-south row of large fir and cedar trees. Running along the west edge of these trees is a concrete curbing (Fig. 65). The origins of this curbing are undetermined, but judging from its position next to the newer trees, it was probably a landscaping feature installed after the trees were planted.

Vegetation has changed enormously, and most of the trees and bushes surrounding the Dorris house and its outbuildings are recent. Historic photographs show a relatively open landscape around the house. Some of the plants and bushes that did exist historically are still present.

Photographs taken between 1936 and the 1950s indicate that grass, in the form of a manicured lawn, has always existed. Mary (Dorris) Trumpener remembered the large holly bush that still stands on the north side of the house. Perhaps some of the oldest surviving bushes, a row of lilacs and quinces outline the west edge of the drive-through garage site (Fig. 66). During the Ben and Kay era, a vegetable garden once occupied a large area on the east side of the house (Fig. 67). Mary's sketch of this garden shows artichokes were planted closest to the house (Fig. 68). They also planted rhododendrons near the northeast side of the swimming pool.

A pergola was erected using 4x4 posts along the north and west sides of the house at least by the early 1940s. Virginia Creeper grew on this structure and along the north porch roof. One of these posts on the north side of the house is still standing. This feature may not have been Ben and Kay's idea since a 1936 photograph shows a similar feature with different posts (Figs. 69 & 70).

## **Building History Report - Dorris Ranch**

### **House Chronology**

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The following represents a chronology of the development of the Dorris house and outbuildings. Documentation providing exact dates of development does not exist. The dates provided below are as accurate as possible and were derived from written, oral, and physical evidence.

- 1892 George and Lulu Dorris purchase the Ranch
- c. 1899 George and Lulu Dorris move into the new house
- Dorris house built
  - outhouse built
  - causeway constructed (road to house)
- c. 1900-1905
- outbuildings constructed
    - \* chicken house
    - \* woodshed
  - bridge across swale constructed
- c. 1905-1920
- drive-through garage (and turn-around drive)
  - rewallpapering and repainting
- c. 1924
- electricity installed
  - first floor bathroom added
- c. 1925-1935 George and Lulu Dorris move out
- verandas screened in
  - outhouse moved/demolished
  - rewallpapering and repainting
  - house reroofed
  - new bridge across diversion channel built
- c. 1936 Ben and Kay Dorris and family move in
- verandas enclosed with glass and veranda doors with transoms installed
- c. 1936-1939
- swimming pool and terraces built
- c. 1940
- new garage built
  - original drive-through garage moved
  - driveway rerouted



c. 1940-1943

- major remodeling of the house including:
  - \* maid's room expanded and turned into utility room (door cut to garage and door cut into bedroom)
  - \* east porch enclosed and kitchen remodeled and expanded to incorporate the porch and pantry
  - \* dining room expanded into the north veranda
  - \* upstairs remodeled including new bathroom with window (faux window added)
  - \* partitions installed in verandas and door transoms filled in
  - \* new finishes throughout; all rooms, except the kitchen, rewallpapered with muslin and paper (kitchen paneled with knotty pine)
  - \* exterior of house shingled and reroofed
  - \* gable vents added
  - \* foundation parged
- concrete walkways poured and covering between house and new garage constructed
- changing house/playroom constructed (chicken house moved to Briggs property)
- freezer house constructed
- new plantings and landscaping features

c. 1943-1972

- repainting
- new bridge built
- original woodshed demolished
- lean-to woodshed on garage constructed and later demolished

1972 Dorris family moves out and Willamalane acquires property

- renters/caretakers move in

1978

- changing house/playroom dismantled and greenhouse constructed over foundation

1972-1988

- repainting
- installation of gypsum board in dining room
- house reroofed